

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 20, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1729

Introduced by Assembly Member Logue

February 14, 2014

~~An act to amend Section 51240 of the Government Code, relating to local government.~~ *An act to amend Section 16148 of the Government Code, relating to local government, and making an appropriation therefor.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1729, as amended, Logue. ~~Local government: agricultural land.~~ *Local government: agricultural land: subvention payments.*

The Williamson Act authorizes a city or county to enter into 10-year contracts with owners of land devoted to agricultural use, whereby the owners agree to continue using the property for that purpose, and the city or county agrees to value the land accordingly for purposes of property taxation. Other existing law sets forth procedures for payments to reimburse cities and counties for property tax revenues not received as a result of these contracts.

This bill would appropriate \$40,000,000 to the Controller from the General Fund for the 2014–15 fiscal year to make subvention payments to counties to reimburse counties for property tax revenues not received as a result of these contracts. The bill would make legislative findings and declarations related to the preservation of agricultural land.

~~Existing law establishes the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, otherwise known as the Williamson Act, for purposes of preserving agricultural land within the state. Existing law authorizes a city or a county, for this purpose, to contract with a landowner to limit~~

~~the use of agricultural land located in an agricultural preserve designated by the city or county.~~

~~This bill would make technical, nonsubstantive changes to the authorization provisions.~~

Vote: ~~majority~~^{2/3}. Appropriation: ~~no~~ yes. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~ yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 *SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the*
2 *following:*

3 *(a) The preservation of our limited supply of agricultural land*
4 *helps to protect the state's economic resources, not only for the*
5 *maintenance of the agricultural economy of the state, but also for*
6 *the assurance of the adequate, healthful, and nutritious food for*
7 *future residents of this state and nation.*

8 *(b) The discouragement of premature and unnecessary*
9 *conversion of agricultural land to urban uses is a matter of public*
10 *interest and benefits to urban residents because it discourages*
11 *noncontiguous urban development patterns that increase the cost*
12 *of community services and vehicle miles traveled.*

13 *(c) The preservation of agricultural lands as open space is also*
14 *a public benefit, and the agricultural production on such lands*
15 *constitutes an important physical, social, aesthetic, and economic*
16 *asset to existing future residents of the state.*

17 *(d) The preservation of agricultural land within scenic highway*
18 *corridors and wildlife habitat areas is also of great value to the*
19 *state because of its scenic beauty and as habitat for wildlife that*
20 *contributes to biological diversity.*

21 *(e) Recent research found that an acre of urban land emits 70*
22 *times more greenhouse gas emissions than an acre of irrigated*
23 *cropland. The Williamson Act helps to keep farmland and open*
24 *space from converting to urban use.*

25 *(f) The open-space subvention program is crucial not only to*
26 *counties' continued participation in the program, but also to the*
27 *state's continued role in overseeing California's most important*
28 *land conservation program.*

29 *SEC. 2. Section 16148 of the Government Code is amended to*
30 *read:*

1 16148. ~~Zero dollars (\$0)~~ *Forty million dollars (\$40,000,000)*
2 is appropriated for the ~~2010-11~~ *2014-15* fiscal year from the
3 General Fund to the Controller to make subvention payments to
4 counties pursuant to Section 16140 in proportion to the losses
5 incurred by those counties by reason of the reduction of assessed
6 property taxes.

7 ~~SECTION 1. Section 51240 of the Government Code is~~
8 ~~amended to read:~~

9 ~~51240. A city or county may by contract limit the use of~~
10 ~~agricultural land to preserve the land pursuant to the conditions~~
11 ~~set forth in the contract and in this chapter. A contract may provide~~
12 ~~for restrictions, terms, and conditions, including payments and~~
13 ~~fees, more restrictive than or in addition to those required by this~~
14 ~~chapter.~~